

The Support Worker of Emile Durkheim House

Maybe she thought she was a support worker. Shortly before midnight she made her own rounds, locking every window and door, not once but thrice. Because I came a few minutes early, I'd hear her at it. If I tried to interrupt her, she'd pretend to be on her way to the toilet. If I asked her why she didn't use the one on her own floor, she'd say it was plugged. It usually was. Checking the toilets was also on my list.

It was 8:15 on a February morning. I had been on duty since midnight. Babs had been a case worker at head office. It was hard to imagine anyone at head office as a case worker. They were too out of touch. They wouldn't even have made good clients. Babs hadn't been popular at head office. That could have been a recommendation. She could have been better than they were. She was worse.

Babs described them to me after the poker game that was her farewell party. Of course I'd already met the manager. I can describe her myself. She was British. She said "yes, yes right" a lot, pronouncing it "royt." I heard her at the unofficial wake he and some other head office characters arranged for us. I think it was really to assuage their guilt. She was a socialite, a suit. Otherwise she couldn't have held his position. She "tut-tutted" a lot. Schizophrenia. What a